

# YOUR 8 YEAR OLD

## POINTS TO REMEMBER

### SAFETY

- ♥ BE A ROLE model for your child by living a healthy lifestyle, including a neat personal appearance. SUPERVISE and encourage your child to have good hygiene habits.
- ♥ AVOID the use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs and make sure your child is educated on substance abuse.
- ♥ ELIMINATE tobacco smoke in your child's environment (the home of your babysitter, friends, relatives, etc). MAKE your car and home a no-smoking zone.
- ♥ SUPERVISE your child's activities with peers and expect your child may make errors in judgment because he/she is trying to imitate peers.
- ♥ INSTALL smoke detectors in your home. CHANGE the batteries twice a year when the time changes in the spring and fall.
- ♥ ALWAYS make sure your child wears a seat belt properly when riding in an automobile and NEVER allow your child to ride in a vehicle if you suspect the driver has been using alcohol or drugs. DO NOT ALLOW anyone using alcohol or drugs to supervise your children.
- ♥ MAKE sure your child is supervised before and after school in a safe environment.
- ♥ TEACH or have someone teach your child to swim and the safety rules of water. Make sure the swimming pool in your community, apartment complex, or home has a four-sided fence with a self-locking, self-latching gate. ALWAYS supervise your child or make sure an adult supervises him/her whenever he/she is in or around water.
- ♥ MAKE SURE your child puts on sunscreen before he/she goes outside for longer periods of time.
- ♥ CONTINUE TO TEACH your child safety rules for the home, including what to do when home alone. Discuss visitors, what to do in case of fire or other emergencies. Conduct fire drills at home. Keep medicine and poisonous products in a safe, secure, locked place. If your child accidentally takes medication, or puts a poisonous product in his/her mouth, call the POISON HOTLINE immediately at 1-800-722-5725. Keep Syrup of Ipecac and activated charcoal in your home. Do not use until you call the poison center for direction. KEEP cigarettes, matches, lighters, alcohol, and electric tools in a safe place.
- ♥ MAKE SURE all guns in the house are locked in a secure place and the ammunition is stored in a separate place. A trigger lock is extra protection that no one can fire your gun.
- ♥ TEACH your child neighborhood safety skills. ANTICIPATE providing less supervision. TEACH him/her to take precautions when approaching dogs, animals and to use judgement when talking to strangers.
- ♥ ENCOURAGE sports safety and discuss this with your child, including the need to wear protective gear, such as a mouth guard, face protector, or a bicycle helmet. NEVER allow your child to operate a lawn mower or motorized power equipment.
- ♥ IF YOU or your child are experiencing emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, TELL your health-care provider or call the ABUSE HOTLINE 1-800-752-6200 for help. Discuss sex education with your child and answer questions at a level appropriate for your child's understanding.

### NUTRITION

- ♥ PROVIDE three meals a day and PROVIDE two to three nutritious snacks a day such as yogurt, fruit, vegetables, or cheerios. MAKE family meal times pleasant and encourage conversation.
- ♥ LIMIT sweets and high-fat snacks, such as candy, soft drinks, or potato chips. ENCOURAGE good eating habits and serve a variety of nutritious foods. Use the Food Guide Pyramid to help plan meals and snacks.
- ♥ BE a model for your child and encourage good eating habits. MAKE SURE he/she is served a nutritious lunch, either through the school program, or by packing a balanced lunch each day.



## **HEALTHY TEETH**

- ♥ **SUPERVISE** your child in thoroughly brushing his/her teeth twice daily.
- ♥ **TEACH** your child to use dental floss once every day.
- ♥ **GIVE** your child fluoride supplements as recommended by their health care provider.
- ♥ **TEACH** your child how to prevent dental injuries and what to do if a tooth is lost or fractured.
- ♥ **SCHEDULE** a dental visit for your child every six months. As new molars erupt, make sure they are evaluated by a dentist for the application of a dental sealant.
- ♥ **TEACH** your child not to smoke, chew or use smokeless tobacco.

## **CARE and INTERACTIONS**

- ♥ **PRAISE** your child for good behavior. **LISTEN** to and show respect for your child.
- ♥ **SHOW AFFECTION** in your family; spend individual time with each child, playing with him/her, and doing activities together you both enjoy. **SHOW** interest in your child's activities.
- ♥ **ENCOURAGE** your child to talk about school, friends, his/her activities and feelings. Encourage reading and give books as gifts.
- ♥ **MAKE SURE** your child understands your discipline guidelines and family rules.
- ♥ **ENCOURAGE** your child to play alone as well as with playmates, brothers, sisters, or parents, and promote physical activity in a safe environment. Monitor television watching and don't allow your child to watch violent or sexually explicit programs.
- ♥ **PROVIDE** opportunities for your child to socialize with other children (i.e., playgroups, Sunday School, pre-school, or other community activities).
- ♥ **USE DISCIPLINE** as a method of teaching and protecting, not as a punishment. **SET** limits which are appropriate for your child and encourage self-discipline.

Reference: Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Bright Futures Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents, National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health, 1994, Arlington, VA.